

CITY OF LOWELL
PETITION

TO THE
CITY COUNCIL
Mary Jo El Kareh

Re: Installation of a Plaque
on the corner of Hanover and
Newmark Sts in Memory
of her parents Joseph and
Mary El Kareh

In City Council

May 11, 2021

Read and

Clerk

Geary, Michael

From: MJ Elkareh <mjelkareh@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 11:17 AM
To: Geary, Michael
Subject: In honor of Joseph & Mary El Kareh

Hello Mike,

I am sending you a copy of the speech I gave at the Lowell City Hall 4/30/19 when the lights were dimmed in the chamber in memory of my parents, Joseph & Mary El Kareh.
At the time I had asked that Hanover St. be renamed to El Kareh St. In their honor.
However after speaking to you this morning it seems that a plaque in their memory could possibly be placed at the corner of Hanover and Merrimack Street.

*"Distinguished board ,My name is
Mary Jo El Kareh I am
Mr. Joseph El Kareh eldest child.
My father died on Good Friday , 3o'Clock Jerusalem time.*

My parents loved the city of Lowell!

*Late 80's early 90's
Many of you will remember*

*buildings boarded up!
people filing bankruptcies!
A mass exodus out!*

*Dad stood firm.
He believed in Lowell, he always said Lowell will come back.*

Dad had many opportunities to leave.

*January 2005, while visiting family on the west coast our home burnt to the ground.
To make things worse, there was a lapse in the homeowners insurance.*

We encouraged dad to leave the city. But, he vowed to rebuild, and he did.

*2013 Dad was honored by the University of Massachusetts, as "THE MOST SUCCESSFUL
BUSINESS IMMIGRANT THAT HAS NOT LEFT THE CITY OF LOWELL."*

*Did you know Lowell was one of the first places in the country to embrace the now world
acclaimed*

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Did you know this humble immigrant of Lebanon, son of Lowell, Joseph El Kareh, was one of the founders of St. Jude, working with Danny Thomas.

In the 70's with his broken but charming english dad carried a video and went from school to school talking about childhood leukemia.

He organize city wide marches and events with hopes of curing this horrible childhood disease.

He would proclaim this is The only hospital that treated children with cancer for free and housed their families.

*There was a lot of resistance when dad brought St. Jude to Lowell people would say,
I'm sorry we gave at the office or
we give to the Red Cross or
the United fund.
But dad persisted.*

Lowell should be proud as it was one of the first cities in the country and now in the world, to embrace the St. Jude charity.

My mother was an exceptional woman and long time staple in the city of Lowell.

*When woman couldn't qualify for a bank loan,
when woman we're told they should be seen & not heard
my mother was one of the first woman to own and operate a business.
And yes it was in the city of Lowell.*

During the war she opened a beauty salon at the Lowell train station were ladies would go to get their hair done as they waited for trains to bring their soldiers home.

*In 1949 after marrying Dad they owned and operated the
"the Vogue Beauty Salons" together.*

They won styling awards in Paris, for the "Italian Boy Haircut"

*Many celebrities came to Lowell as their clients included,
Judy Garland
Danny Thomas
The Kennedy's
Frank Sinatra
Betty Davis*

I was very young when Senator Ted Kennedy came to visit, my mother often said he loved to eat humus.

At the time he was expecting his first child, it was a girl. There was a discussion as to what to name the baby well he decided to name her Kara after our family name El Kareh.

I am here today as the family is honored by the kindness of the city to dim the lights in this chamber in his memory.

If I can be so humble to request from this distinguished city council that Hanover St, a small side street off Merrimack st, which abuts the El Kareh building be renamed El Kareh St. In his memory.

Please support this request and honor a man who honored this city.

Thank you"

Mike, it would truly be a dream come true if a plaque could be placed in their memory. Thank you for offering to take this request to the chamber.

You can reach me at
714-240-7382
MJ
Mary Jo El Kareh

CITATION

*Be it hereby known to all that the City of Lowell
in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
hereby offers its sincere congratulations to*

JOSEPH EL KAREH

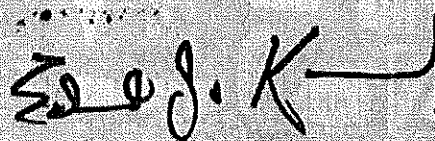
upon the celebration of his 100th Birthday.

Joseph was born in Beirut, Lebanon on January 9, 1917 and moved to the United States in 1950. Joseph was married to Mary Maroon El Kareh who died on March 13, 2009. Mary opened the Vogue Beauty Salon in Lowell in 1943, one of the first of a chain of full care hair salons and together with Joseph, ran the business for 60 yrs.

Joseph and Mary had four daughters, Mary Jo, Adele, Joanne and Colette.

The City of Lowell is proud to call Joseph one of our own and wish him many more birthdays to celebrate with his family and friends. Enjoy your special day. Wishing you many more years of happiness.

Given this 9th day of January, 2017.



Edward J. Kennedy
Mayor

Daniel P. Rourke
Vice Chair
Corey Belanger
Rodney M. Elliott
John J. Leahy
James D. Leary
Rita M. Mercier
James L. Millinazzo
William Samaras

